

February 1985

Letters ...

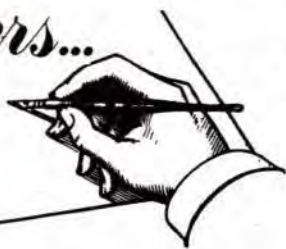
Catholic Physicians' Guild

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Letters...



New Member Comments

To the Editor:

I just joined the NFPCG this Spring and had the privilege of attending the meeting in Philadelphia in October. I was delighted and reassured to find so many physicians who are committed to the teaching of the Church on major moral issues.

On the chance that it might be appropriate fare for the *Linacre Quarterly*, I have enclosed my own personal witness as it appeared in our community newsletter.

Yours in Christ,
Kenneth J. Berkes, M.D.

(Editor's note: Doctor Berkes's personal witness, "A Child Is Born," appears on page 34.)

On Dougherty Article

To the Editor:

Professor Dougherty argues a case for pre-natal diagnosis (*L.Q.*, Vol. 51, No. 2, May, 1984) which fails to make a distinction which is of great importance in the appraisal of the techniques.

As things stand, the treatment of fetal disorders in utero are undertaken late in pregnancy and certainly not before the twenty-fourth week. Thus a distinction can be made between the tests being applied early in the pregnancy or late in the pregnancy. I see little objection to the latter as it is

unlikely that anyone intent on selective abortion would leave the test so late, and as the fetus is moving toward viability if not already viable, the risks are reduced, and the test may provide the basis for treatment in utero, and better gynecological and obstetric management.

I can see no justification for the application of ante-natal diagnosis prior to twenty weeks and perhaps not before twenty-four to twenty-seven weeks unless selective abortion is intended.

Thus it would be feasible for a Catholic health service to provide late ante-natal diagnosis but not permit early ante-natal diagnosis. This would clearly remove the threat of an association with selective abortion but still allow the use of the test in the interests of the child.

Yours sincerely,
Nicholas Tonti-Filippini,
Research Officer and Hospital Ethicist
St. Vincent's Bioethics Centre
Melbourne, Australia

Letter from New Zealand

It has been a difficult and depressing year, except for the Christmas holiday weather which has been absolute perfection. Young and old are swimming every day and cooking up a bonanza for the plastic surgeons a few years hence. Our incidence of basal cell carcinoma, epithelioma and melanoma is surpassed only by Australia's.

The main problems for the Church are the dearth of vocations and the decline in religious practice. Less than half of the Catholics go to Mass and the sacraments. But this is a worldwide problem and some countries are even worse, if that is any consolation. What can one do for the brokenhearted parents?

Our illegitimacy rate is almost 23 percent; legal abortions have a ratio of

births of 1:7; and of these patients some 70 percent are unmarried. The average family size has fallen precipitately to only 1.9 children. Not the happiest social picture you could wish to see.

The National Women's Hospital IVF team has produced four successful pregnancies in its first year, along with a deluge of sentimental comments. In my view the procedures are illicit and therefore harmful to normal marriage and sexuality, but no one wants to hear this when presented with a beautiful new baby. There is urgent need for papal statement on the principles involved.

After nine years in power the National Government (conservative) was soundly beaten by the Labor (left-wing) Party in a snap election. Coming unexpectedly to rule, Labor has gone from one blunder to another and after some six months has lost most of its popular appeal.

Faced with a run on the dollar in his first week, Prime Minister Lang devalued immediately by 20 percent. The \$US now buys over \$NZ2.00 I can remember when that figure was about NZ80c. The value of the currency has been declining for years, thanks to wasting our resources on sentimental social welfare, free health, free education and the enormous bureaucracy that goes with socialist philosophies. New Zealanders can hardly afford to leave the country but overseas visitors, especially Americans, are flocking in to enjoy their good fortune while it lasts.

Radical feminists are enjoying official favour. Voluntary unionism is to become compulsory again. Superannuation, which everyone gets at age 60, is not going to be cut (an election promise) but it is going to be blitzed by a 25 percent surtax on anyone earning over \$5,000 a year! A grey revolution is brewing.

The worst blunder has been to close our ports to nuclear-powered and/or nuclear-armed ships, in the interests of pacifism and environmentalism. This hiding from the 20th century might

mean the end of the ANZUS treaty which has protected New Zealand since World War II. It effectively blocks the US Navy from visiting its supposed ally. The final word has not been said. A recent poll showed that 70 percent are in favour of the US treaty.

The Government will have to change its foolish policy and lose face. Anyone who, like me, served with the US Navy during the war, realizes that we could not exist except under the American umbrella. Meanwhile the Soviet Navy this week has sent its newest and largest battle cruiser, *Funze*, into these waters. Labor politicians traditionally view the Soviets as the harbingers of peace and joy. Anyone for tennis?

Our oldest citizen, a Maori lady of 112 years, died recently. On her last birthday she said that she always enjoyed her cigarettes but her doctors had been telling her for years that they were bad for her health. Which all goes to show that Medicine is not an exact science.

H. P. Dunn
Auckland

Sidelights on Miracles

To the Editor:

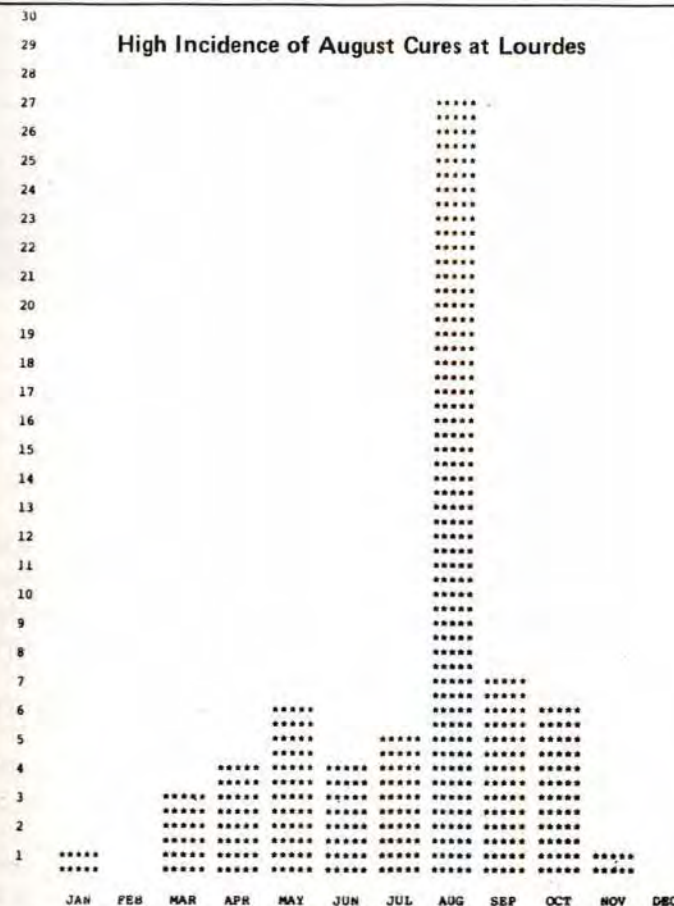
It was of interest to me to note that, in the table of recognized miraculous cures at Lourdes attached to Dr. E. F. Diamond's article "Miraculous Cures" (August, 1984 issue), the highest incidence of cures was in the month of August — 27 of the total 64. In addition, nine of the August cures were on the 21st of that month; seven of these nine cases involved tuberculosis. The accompanying graph of the monthly incidence of these miraculous occurrences may be of significance to future

pilgrims.

It may be coincidental that the miraculous apparition of Our Lady of Knock, Ireland, was also on August 21st.

Yours sincerely,
Catherine Ann Toohey Walsh,
R.N., M.S.Ed.
Pastoral Counselor

High Incidence of August Cures at Lourdes



Details for the month of August:

